

The Times Dispatch

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SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1914.

THE BEGINNING OF FEE REFORM.

The fee bill passed by the House yesterday is not as good as that introduced by Messrs. West and Brewer, not as bad as that reported by the Senate committee, and may be of value in more ways than one.

The original West-Brewer bill came as near the immediate solution of the fee problem as any proposal yet made. The scale of compensation allowed by it was reasonable, though not excessive, and the machinery it provided promised full publicity in respect to all fees. But when this bill had passed through the hands of the Senate committee, it was rather surprising that its patron recognized it. Besides about doubling the scale of remuneration, the bill limited its operation to a very small part of the State.

We felt called upon, when the bill was reported by the committee to show that it was little more than a sham—not a reform worthy of the name. But thanks to the activity of Senators who are dead in earnest, this measure was further amended on the floor of the Senate to make it reach practically all fee officers, regardless of the size of their counties or cities. While the scale of fees remained the same, the bill was strengthened fifty per cent in the changes hammered into the bill in the Senate.

Unfortunately, the roll calls on the various amendments proposed in the House do not give an absolute roster of its friends and opponents of genuine fee reform. Some who favored a bill with a proper compensation voted against the amendments not because they did not favor them, but because they were afraid. At this stage of the proceedings, to trust the bill again to the hostile element in the Senate. We know that this is the explanation of the vote of Mr. Brewer, the patron of the bill, and a man who is absolutely frank.

At the same time, the reader who will take the trouble to study the roll calls on all the amendments proposed in the House will find that throughout a little cluster stood steadfastly for a bill that idea became universally accepted and generally applied. He was past threescore when he saw the sea of geared turbines for driving ship propellers, declared impossible fifteen years ago by the United States Navy. During the intervening years he kept practical men, and even idealists alternately engaged in denying the possibility of the execution of his ideas and repudiating their denial. No other man, save Thomas Edison, has done more to wipe from our lexicons the word impossible.

Huerta says he will die with his boots on if he doesn't look out he will die with a jag on.

If the Progressives refuse to nominate him what will he call his new party?

"Does Congress know its own mind?" asks John Temple Graves. It knows. Wilson's.

South Carolina reporter whipped a Salom and then apologized. Cole Please has talked a great deal, but has yet to place himself under the necessity of apologizing.

We know some people who if they were twice as intelligent, might give color to the theory that man is descended from the monkey.

"General Carranza surely overstates the case when he asserts that intervention in Mexico would endanger the entire political future of the United States," says the Charlotte Observer. There is little doubt, however, that it would change the entire political future of the United States.

Secondly, this bill provides that both the amount of fees that should be collected and of those that are actually taken in shall be given in full in a book, the form of which shall be prescribed by the Auditor of Public Accounts. This section of the bill apparently escaped notice while it was under discussion, but it was incorporated for a very significant reason. It has been reported from time to time that fee officers have the habit in some instances of retaining the fees of their friends for political reasons, thus adding new rags to their political raiment. While this has never been proved, it is determined proper to provide a book in which such fees will be recorded. The whole animus of the resolutions is disclosed.

Wholesome and pessimistic, we are told, will mix. Certainly not, one cannot mix cause and effect.

The World Turns—Editorial headline. Has authority of statement no limit?

After looking at reprints of that focus of Velasquez, blashed by a million suffragettes, we became haunted with the suspicion that Anthony Comstock had a hand in the slaying.

Balkan wars, it is charged, are "wire-pulled" but our informant fails to tell wherein they differ from most other wars.

Trying to wash the L. W. W.'s as scoundrels not only for the good it will do, but for the greater good it will make possible. Two years ago the Senate could not have been so far-sighted as to put off separation from the old motherland.

Terrible may be the toll of the future.

Still the country is not the only one hardly to be taxed. Washington has any price to pay for its neutrality.

A Negro is a black who is not for sale, and when he gets his freedom and develops some social muscle, which prevents him from getting by the recruiting offices.

Senator Penick, however, when he attempts to turn his back to Pennsylvania from the national affairs, but example.

If Please really means that he can't match him as a lawyer, the country could watch that boy. Openly, equitably, confident of satisfaction however it results.

RICHMOND SHOULD COUNT THE COST.

Before the municipal pension system is extended in Richmond the cost should be determined; the details of operation learned; the organization of the machinery studied, and every fact, important or unimportant, bearing on the subject learned, studied and dissected. The result should then be laid before the people that they may have full knowledge of what they are undertaking and how much the undertaking is to cost, that they may know that a certain principle is to be correctly and economically applied; that they may know, in short, that they are to secure the best results at the lowest possible expense necessary to secure them.

The principle of municipal pensions is, we believe, sound, and The Times-Dispatch would like to see it adopted by the Richmond Council, when possible. However, many sound principles may be unwisely and unscientifically applied. This principle has been so applied elsewhere.

According to the report of the Bureau of Municipal Research of New York, which has made a study of this question, waste and inefficiency and heavy financial loss has been the result in many cities.

The pension fund of the city of Pittsburgh is now \$2,000,000 short, not because of dishonest administration, but because of inefficient administration of an unsound system. This and other failures may be avoided by the city of Richmond by a little study of method and by a little correspondence with those who have studied the theoretical and practical questions involved. The Bureau of Municipal Research of New York has facts and figures and digests of the experiences, failures and successes of others. Its knowledge and advice are at the service of the City Council of Richmond.

WESTINGHOUSE—PRACTICAL IDEALIST.

George W. Westinghouse, who died Thursday, was one of the world's great men, because he combined in himself two of the elements of greatness. There have been great idealists and great constructionists, but the greatest are those who possess both idealism and power of application. Westinghouse, the inventor, was a practical idealist a scientific visionary. He controlled his imagination and put it to work, rather than allowed himself to be controlled by it. He applied his own theories and proved them sound. Going further he reaped the monetary reward of his inventions by manufacturing that which he invented. Many of his visions were declared by practical men to be visions only and impossible of realization. Westinghouse not only saw, but made, not only dreamed, but acted, not only advertised his faith, but proved it by works.

Westinghouse was fifteen when he conceived the idea of the air brake, and had scarcely passed his majority when that idea became universally accepted and generally applied. He was past threescore when he saw the sea of geared turbines for driving ship propellers, declared impossible fifteen years ago by the United States Navy. During the intervening years he kept practical men, and even idealists alternately engaged in denying the possibility of the execution of his ideas and repudiating their denial. No other man, save Thomas Edison, has done more to wipe from our lexicons the word impossible.

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At the very least, the bill is more than the people of Virginia have ever received before. It gives us to infer that the services of clerk of a court, of a treasurer, or of any like officer in a large city are worth more to the Commonwealth than those of the Governor, the Auditor or the president of the Supreme Court. But this apart, the bill contains several good features, and two that are of real consequence.

The first of these is provision that the fee books of all the officers covered by the law are public records, open to inspection at all times. This will insure as publicity where before there has been doubt and a "Yes" will give us accurate material on which to base future legislation.

Secondly, this bill provides that both the amount of fees that should be collected and of those that are actually taken in shall be given in full in a book, the form of which shall be prescribed by the Auditor of Public Accounts. This section of the bill apparently escaped notice while it was under discussion, but it was incorporated for a very significant reason. It has been reported from time to time that fee officers have the habit in some instances of retaining the fees of their friends for political reasons, thus adding new rags to their political raiment. While this has never been proved, it is determined proper to provide a book in which such fees will be recorded. The whole animus of the resolutions is disclosed.

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THE TIMES-DISPATCH: RICHMOND, VA., SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1914.

SALEALFA BILL OWNS UP.

The effort made in Congress Thursday to twist innocent and humorous remarks of Ambassador Page into a meaning absolutely foreign to his intentions and to use them as a weapon with which to fight the repeal of the toll exemption clause of the Panama Canal act, will fail. It will fail because the attempt to pervert their meaning is so ridiculous in view of the known facts, and because the purpose of the attempted perversion is so naively confessed by one of those who introduced the resolution calling upon the toll exemption clause of the Panama Canal act, will fail. It will fail because the attempt to pervert their meaning is so ridiculous in view of the known facts, and because the purpose of the attempted perversion is so naively confessed by one of those who introduced the resolution calling upon the toll exemption clause of the Panama Canal act, will fail. 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